

QUAD-COUNTY RTPO (QUADCO)

Quad County RTPO is the lead transportation planning agency for the four-county (Adams, Grant, Kittitas, and Lincoln) area. QUADCO RTPO covers an area of 9,214 square miles. The QUADCO region extends from the forested summit of Snoqualmie Pass, east across plains and plateaus and the Columbia River, to the vast fields of wheat and barley in Eastern Adams and Lincoln counties.



The Stuart Range above the Ellensburg Valley



Wild Horses Monument near Vantage

Major Transportation Facilities:

Major transportation facilities in the four-county region include: I-82, I-90, US 2, US 97, US 395, US 970 and SR 17. Other important transportation facilities are the Columbia River system, Burlington Northern-Santa Fe railroad line, Grant County International Airport, and several other regional airports.

Demographics:

The four-county area had a combined population of 134,672 in 2000. This represents almost 2.3 percent of the state population. Although sparsely populated the QUADCO region population is growing fast

— up 30 percent from 1990 to 2000. Grant County — up 36 percent from 1990 to 2000 — was the third fastest growing county in the State.

Freight Movement:

Interstate 90, designated as a strategic freight corridor, serves as the major east-west facility for freight movement through Central Washington. This

highway — a National Scenic Byway — traverses 200 miles of QUADCO from the summit of Snoqualmie Pass to the Lincoln County line near Spokane. Interstate 90 serves the intra-regional needs of transporting agricultural products from farm to market. Congestion on I-90 affects the

	Population (2000)	Persons Per Square Mile	Median Household Income (1997)
Washington State:	5,894,121	88.6	\$41,715
Adams County:	16,428	8.5	\$32,250
Grant County:	74,698	27.9	\$32,405
Kittitas County:	33,362	14.5	\$32,375
Lincoln County:	10,184	4.4	\$34,888

region's delivery of freight to markets and intermodal connections on the west side of the Cascade Mountains. Wintertime closures interfere with freight movement vital to the economy of this agricultural region. North-south strategic freight corridors include: US 97/SR 970, I-82, US 395/SR 17, and SR 28/281 between I-90 and Wenatchee. These highways provide corridors for inter-regional transport of all kinds of products passing through the state from destinations as varied as Asia, Mexico, Canada, and the Eastern seaboard

Truck Freight — The fruit and potato industries centered in QUADCO are particularly significant generators of freight truck traffic. The cities of Moses Lake, Quincy, and Othello each generate an average of 100 truck trips per day. More than one-third of truck trips originating in this region are destined for Eastern Washington locations. But the largest percentage of truck trips from QUADCO is headed out of state.

Rail Freight — The types of freight that are moved by rail include grain, intermodal trailers and containers, lumber, and agriculture products.

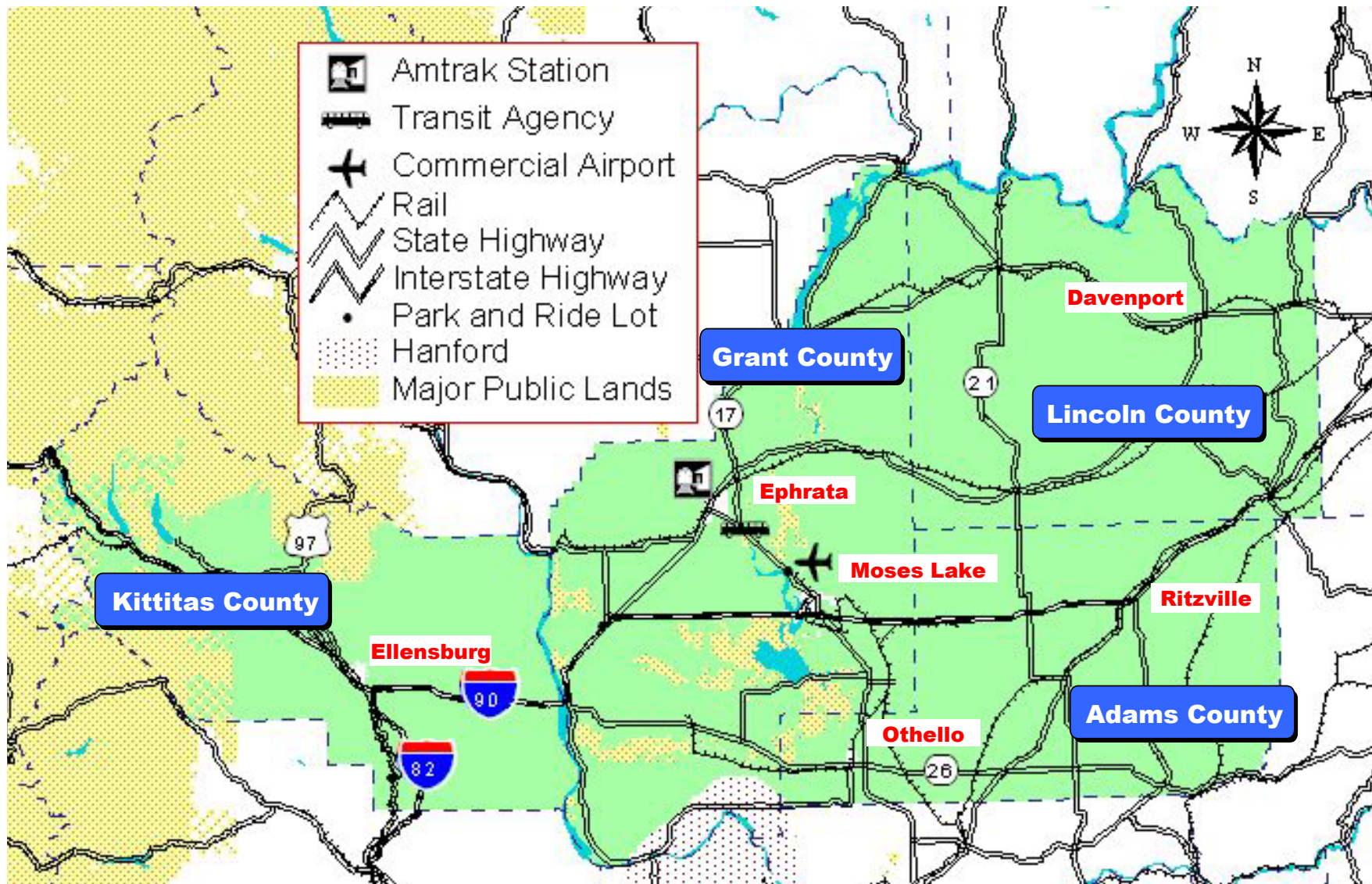
Railroad lines serving this region are: Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Union Pacific, Palouse River and Coulee City, Columbia Basin. Amtrak provides passenger service.

Economic Trends:

Kittitas County is growing in the shipment of containerized hay overseas. Agricultural diversity continues to increase in the irrigated lands of the Columbia Basin. Orchards, vineyards, and seed farms are adding to the agricultural base of potatoes, onions, corn, irrigated and dry-land grain production, and other crops. Food processing is an important and growing industry, which requires an efficient means of transporting the products. Industrial development, including the manufacture of high tech products, is being facilitated by the construction of fiber optic facilities in Grant County. Recreational opportunities in the region continue to attract development, such as a proposed master-planned resort near Cle Elum. The sunshine and beauty of QUADCO have made it a playground for Puget Sound area residents wishing to escape the congestion and wet weather of the west side. Recreational activities range from snow skiing to boating to concerts at the Gorge Amphitheater. In contrast to this growth, Adams County, the eastern-most part of this region, has enormous tracts of land dedicated to range-related agriculture. Developable land and an expansive fiber optic project have spurred on commercial development and manufacturing in Grant County. Easy and safe highway access and improvement of unpaved local roads to all-weather standards will continue to be critical to the success of the economy of the QUADCO region.



Wheat fields in Adams County



Transportation Priorities:



Aviation: Aviation is an important transportation service in QUADCO.

Projects supported by the QUADCO Regional Transportation Plan that address this issue include:

- Renovation of Grant County International Airport.
- Development of the Ellensburg Airport (Bowers Field) and improving airport access.

I-90/Snoqualmie Pass East:

I-90 is the major east-west corridor linking the Seattle/Puget Sound area with Eastern Washington and the rest of the country. It has been designated as a National Scenic Byway. I-90 is a critical link between the eastern and western regions of Washington, carrying more than 33 million tons of freight goods over the Cascade Mountains each year. The ability to move freight and goods as well as commuter and recreational traffic across the Cascades is frequently reduced due to avalanche closures, accidents, and limited roadway capacity. The twelve-mile section from Hyak to Easton is consistently cited as the region's number one transportation priority.



Avalanche control on I-90 closes eastbound lanes

I-90/Snoqualmie Pass East projects identified in the Regional Plan include:

***QUADCO Needs
Operation, Maintenance, Preservation &
Special Needs Transportation projects:***

State-Interest Facilities

<i>Transit</i>	<i>\$75.0 million</i>
<i>Aviation</i>	<i>\$35.0 million</i>

- Widening I-90 from Hyak to Easton from 4 lanes to 6 lanes – reducing congestion and improving cross-Cascades travel.
- Increasing roadway safety - correcting substandard curves, vertical clearance for bridges, and decreasing roadside hazards.
- Eliminating routine avalanche closures – providing decreased delays to freight and goods.

Freight Mobility:

Congestion and winter closures on I-90 affect the reliable and timely movement of freight through the region and across the state. Poor access to the interstate both slows freight movement and limits economic development.

Examples of projects endorsed by WSDOT and QUADCO to address the issue of freight mobility include:



Freight, recreation and passenger vehicles share two lanes on I-90

- Westbound truck climbing lane on I-90 from Vantage to Ryegrass Summit.
- Revisions at the I-90/US 97/SR 970 interchange east of Cle Elum.
- Eastbound truck climbing lane on I-90 east of Cle Elum.
- Moses Lake Area Bridge Clearance: This project will replace the one remaining structure in the corridor, which is too low to allow passage of modern trucks.
- Southbound truck climbing lane from Thrall Road to Manastash Ridge on I-82.
- Repairs and improvements necessary to re-open the Old Milwaukee Road railroad line through Lind.
- State Route 17 from Pioneer Way to Stratford Road. This project will widen SR 17 from two lanes to four through the congested corridor in the city of Moses Lake.
- A Mobility Study on State Route 28 from Wenatchee to I-90 Mobility Study. This project will study the options for providing a four-lane corridor between I-90, the major east-west highway in the state, and the Wenatchee area. Wenatchee is the only urban area in the state that is not served by a four-lane freeway.

QUADCO Needs
Congestion Management projects:

State Highways	\$1,313.1 million
Transit	\$20.6 million

QUADCO Needs
Freight Movement projects:

State Highways	\$306.2 million
Freight Rail	\$580.1 million



“Grain Trains” cut down on highway haul

The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway (BNSF), Union Pacific Railroad, and local branch lines are components of the transportation system in the QUADCO region. These rail lines provide some short-haul freight services to rural communities and agricultural producers. An example is the Grain Train. State-owned grain cars are used to transport regionally grown grain to local markets. The value of rail service to the highway user is important. If rail traffic were shifted to trucks, it would take more than a million trucks per year to haul the same amount of freight that the railroads transport between the junction of US 395 and Ritzville to I-405 in the Seattle area.

QUADCO Transportation Facts:

- The Columbia Basin Project and agricultural industries in Adams and Grant Counties annually account for over 10 million tons of freight with a production value of more than 1 billion dollars.
- Grant and Kittitas Counties are two of the state's largest hay producing and shipping areas with average tons per year shipped by a typical facility at 35,000 and 29,500 respectively. Ninety-eight percent of the hay is shipped via truck either to its final destination or to an ocean port. All of the hay processing facilities receive their commodity via truck.
- The dry-land hills of Lincoln and Adams Counties can produce over 20 million bushels of wheat and other grains each year for shipment to Asian export markets using the Columbia River, railroads and highways.
- In 1996, Lincoln County had the state's lowest collision rate; Adams was the 3rd lowest. Kittitas and Grant Counties also had relatively low collision rates ranking 7th and 13th respectively.
- Grant County International Airport, formerly Larson Air Force Base, is a world-class heavy jet training and testing facility used by the Boeing Company, Japan Airlines, the U.S. Military, and many other air carriers from around the world. With 4,700 acres and a main runway 13,500 feet long, it is one of the largest airports in the United States. The airport is located within the foreign trade zone of the Port of Moses Lake.

Members: Counties: *Adams, Grant, Kittitas, and Lincoln;*

Cities: *Almira, Coulee City, Coulee Dam, Creston, Davenport, Electric City, Ellensburg, Ephrata, George, Grand Coulee, Harrington, Krupp, Lind, Mattawa, Moses Lake, Odessa, Othello, Quincy, Reardan, Ritzville, Roslyn, Royal City, Soap Lake, Sprague, Warden, Washtucna, Wilbur and Wilson Creek;*

Transit Agencies: *Grant Transit Authority*

Ports: *Port of Ephrata, Port of Moses Lake, and Port of Royal Slope;*

State Agency: *WSDOT*